

REMARKS

The Office Action of February 26, 2003 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is amended and new claims 15-20 are added herein. Claim 1, and new claims 15 and 18, are independent claims.

The title of the invention is amended herein by the applicant to be more descriptive of the scope of the amended claims.

Claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kotani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,101,536) in view of Saxena et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,259,449). Except to the extent addressed by the amendments to claim 1, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant's independent claim 1, as amended, recites an image signal transmitting apparatus for transmitting image signals stored in an image acquiring system or storage system to an image signal receiving center for processing the image signals, the image signal transmitting apparatus comprising:

a function selection panel, comprising a multiple keypad, for the entering of transmission signals by a user;

a receiving unit, comprising a transmission interface, wherein the receiving unit receives the image signals stored in the image acquiring system or storage system for the transmission interface;

a controller for receiving the image signals received through the transmission interface and the transmission signals entered by the user through the function selection panel, and for controlling the sending of the image signals; and

a transmitting unit coupled to the controller for sending the image signals to the image receiving center in a remote location according to the transmission signals.

In rejecting claim 1, the Examiner points to Kotani as teaching an image transmitting terminal used as an image generating device which serves to receive video camera control signals to control the camera and execute the signal for transmission to a network through which transmission of an image to a remote monitoring terminal takes place (column 3, lines 9-18 and 63-66). Specifically, the Examiner points to Kotani as disclosing the use of a network (100) with respect the monitoring terminal (60) transmitting control signals to the image transmitting terminal (20). According to the Examiner, Kotani also teaches the monitoring terminal and transmitting terminal contain a software (410) and multiple softwares respectively (column 4, lines 1-5, 32-36; Figure 1 and Figure 2). Kotani discloses image receiving software (412) for displaying the image data transmitted in a packet format from the image transmitting terminal, and a map management software (413) having a graphical user interface (column 4, lines 32-45; and Figure 2). Kotani also teaches that the image transmission is made by request from the image receiving software (412) to the image transmitting software (422), which in turn transmits the requested data (column 6, lines 7-14). Further, Kotani teaches the monitoring terminal (60) with respect to memory (124, 125, and 126) as well as various methods for storing the data (column 15, lines 9-19, the and Figure 1).

The system disclosed in Kotani and the present invention differ significantly in their respective purposes and functions. Kotani describes a system for controlling and monitoring a plurality of remote terminals equipped with video cameras (see Abstract), while the present invention is directed to an image transmitting apparatus for transmitting image signals to an image signal receiving center for central processing and outputting (Application page 1, lines 6-8). Accordingly, in Kotani, the monitoring terminal (60) sends a control signal for the video camera (10) to the image transmitting terminal (20). (Kotani column 4, lines 1-5). Correspondingly, the image transmitting terminal in Kotani receives the video camera control signal, controls the video camera (10) according to such control signal and returns the resulting

state of the video camera (10) to the monitor terminal (60) (column 3, lines 10-18). The present application neither discloses nor has a need for such a feature. In the present invention, all transmissions are one-way from the image signal transmitting apparatus to the image signal receiving center and are initiated by a user through the function selector panel (see Application Figure 2).

Further, Kotani fails to teach or suggest that the transmitting terminals sends the image signals to the image receiving center in a remote location according to transmission signals entered by the user through the function selection panel, as amended claim 1 requires. Rather, Kotani discloses that the image receiving software (412) in the monitoring terminal requests the transmission of data of a frame, through the network (100), to the image transmitting software (422) of the image transmitting terminal to which the camera is connected. In response, the image transmitting software (422) transmits, to the image receiving software (412), the data of the latest captured frame in the form of divided packets (column 6, lines 7-14).

The Examiner acknowledges that Kotani fails to disclose the use of a function selection panel with multiple keypads and a transmission interface through which image signals are received. To cure this deficiency in the primary reference, Kotani, the Examiner points to Saxena as teaching a user interface including keypads (420) displaying alphanumeric keys, and the use of a universal serial bus (USB), both applicable to the integrated communications center (see Figure 4 and column 5, lines 32-45). The Examiner argues it would have been obvious to one having skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Kotani's communication apparatus to include Saxena's keypad configuration along with the use of a Universal Serial Bus (USB). The Examiner asserts that one would have been motivated in view of the suggestion in Saxena that the use of a keypad as used to Saxena's user interface

(Figure 4) along with the USB are functionally equivalent to the desired function selection panel and transmission interface, respectively.

The applicant respectfully disagrees. It appears that the Examiner has in hindsight taken elements from the Saxena reference without consideration of what the references taken as a whole suggest. Saxena is directed to a system for integrating communications programs in a computer through a graphical interface that provides access to the diverse functions of the programs. While Saxena discloses the use of a keypad as an element of the graphical user interface, there is no suggestion as to how this teaching might be combined with the communications system of Kotani that involves a monitoring terminal and a plurality of transmitting terminals.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1, as well as dependant claims 2-14, patentably distinguish over the applied references, whether taken individually or in combination.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that the dependant claims recite features that independently distinguish over the applied art references. For example, claim 10 recites, "the transmission interface is used for accessing a Personal Computer Memory Card International Association (PCMCIA) card which is coupled with the transmission interface." The Examiner refers to Kotani, column 15, lines 9-18, as disclosing this feature. However, what the referenced text discusses is a memory medium for storing a program for operating the various embodiments of Kotani. The referenced text fails to disclose the use of a standard PCMCIA memory card slot as a transmission interface for image signals, as claim 10 requires.

Claim 13 recites, "the image signal receiving center is used for processing the image signals so as to produce photos by developing the images using optical projection techniques." Claim 14 recites, "the image signal receiving center is used for processing the image signals so as to produce photos by developing the images on an article according to the image signals."

With regard to these claims, the Examiner points to Kotani (Figure 2) as teaching the camera control client (411) and camera control server (421). The relevance of these elements to claims 13 and 14 is unclear. As noted above, the present invention does not include or claim any camera control features.

Claim 1 is amended herein to emphasize that in the present invention the transmission signals, used for controlling the sending of the image signals, are entered by a user through the function selection panel, and not received from the central processing center. Claims 15-20 are system and method claims intended to further protect the disclosed invention.

In summary, it is respectfully requested that this application, as amended, with claims 1-20 be allowed, and that the rejections be withdrawn. Notice of such allowance and passing of the application to issue, are earnestly requested.

Should the Examiner feel that a conference would be helpful in expediting the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

May 21, 2003
Date


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Appendix